

Hearts-Index, OR Self-Knowledg:

Together with

- I. The wonderful Change that the *Word* and *Spirit*, do work upon the *Heart*, when a Sinner is converted.
- II. The excellency of *Grace* above *Nature*.
- III. The *Safety* and *Calm* of such as have sued out their pardon in *Christ*.

By R. YOUNG of *Roxwell* in *Essex*.

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Section I.

Robable it is, that that *medicine* which hath cured one desperate *Patient*, if it be communicated, may work the same effect upon others; the concealment whereof, would argue in a *Physician*, either too much *lucre*, or too little *love*. However, the conscience of good intentions in themselves (let their success be what it will) is both a discharge and comfort to a free and willing mind.

A fine wit, and a Christian wit, is like the little Bee, that will not off the meanest flower, until it hath made somewhat of it: whereas an *unsanctified heart*, will (*spider-like*) suck poison from the choicest of flowers.

Every line of Gods word shall adde sinew to the vertuous mind, and withal heal that vice, which would be springing in it. But with the carnally minded, it is far otherwise. The same report, wherewith the spirit of *Rahab melteth*, hardens the King of *Jericho*, Josh. 2. *Sergius Paulus* was converted, *Elymas obdurate*, at the same Sermon, *Acts* 13. that one hard saying of our Saviour, John 6. like a file sharpened eleven of his Apostles; while it so blunted the rest of his Disciples, that many of them murmured, and from that time went back, and walked no more with him, verse 66, &c. Whence observe, that as all bodies, are not equally apt to be wrought upon by the same medicine; so are not all souls by the same means of Grace. One remains obstinate and refractory, while others are pliable.

Sin and Satan, have no Servants but the simple. As for instance: A wise man hearing in what a dangerous condition he is in, by reason of original and actual sins, and how God is so incensed with wrath and indignation against him, that he means utterly to destroy him, if he go on in his impenitency; foreseeth the evil of Hell, and preventeth it, by departing from his evil wayes: but fools go on, and are careless, Prov. 22 3. and 14. 16. Stark fools indeed: for if their Eyes were opened, to see in what a condition, they are content at present to continue in; they should need no intreaty, to turn their course another way. Luther says that if a man could perfectly see his own evils, and the misery that attends them, the sight thereof would be a perfect Hell unto him: and this indeed might prove to be his way to Heaven; For then, and not till then, a man sees what need he hath of a Saviour; and then he begins rightly to prize the Joyes of Heaven, when he sees he hath escaped the Flames of Hell, which those fools before spoken of, never mean to do, because they think themselves wise, good, happy, and what not? The case of all men by Nature. And until that veil or curtain which is drawn over their hearts, be removed, and taken away by unfeigned repentance, and turning to the Lord, they remain

mark blind to all saving truths, as the *Apostle* plainly sets down, 2 *Cor.* 3. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18. See *Rev.* 3. 17. 1 *Tim.* 6. 4. And the truth is, were it not for pride and ignorance (springing hence) every man would make it his main business, to work out his Salvation with fear and trembling. But to proceed, for this is but an excursion, let us, by way of a parenthesis, and in zeal for their good, that desire not their own. The *Ninivites* by hearkning to *Jonah*, and those murderers of the Lord of Life, by listening to *Peter*, were converted and saved, *Jonah* 3. 4, 5: *Acts* 2. 37. Wax (we know) yeeldeth sooner to the seal, than steel to the stamp.

SECT. 2. Of Hearers, there are usually four sorts, as our Saviour shews, in the Parable of the seed, *Mat.* 13. 3, to 24. As first, An honest and good heart, will not return from hearing the Word unbettered: yea, he will so note what is spoken to his own sin, that it shall increase his knowledge, and lessen his vices. As who (by looking in a glass) shall spy spots in his face, and will not forthwith wipe them out? A wise man will not have one sin twice repeated unto him. Yea, he more rejoiceth, in being overcome with a wise and gracious advice, then he would have rejoiced in a revengeful victory. Of which we have a rare example, 1 *Sam.* 25. 32, 33. A true argument of an ingenuous nature. Whereas those that will not hearken to, nor obey the voice of *Christ*, but rage and storm; are more stubborn than the wind and sea, *Luke* 8. 24, 25. enough to make them blush blood, when told of it. But

Secondly, Another sort of Hearers, are like *Tully's* strange foil; much rain leaves them still as dry as dust. Or the Wolf in the Emblem, which though it sucks the Goat, kept notwithstanding his Woolfish nature still. And indeed, until the spirit of God meekens the soul, say what you will, it minds nothing, or nothing to purpose. Whatever an impenitent sinner hears, it presently passes away, like the sound of a Bell that is rung. Let testimonies and examples never so much concern them, it makes an impression but skin, or ear-deep: For as in an hour-glass or conduit, that which in one hour runneth in, the same in another hour runneth out again. Who may be resembled to the *Smiths* Iron, put it into the fire it is much softened, but put it into the

Thirdly, Another sort will very orderly *hear* the Word, and *delight* in it, until it comes home to their *consciences*, touches their Copy-hold (as *John* served *Herod*) but then they will turn their backs upon it, as the *Jews*, served our *Saviour*, *John* 6.66. the *Athenians*, *Paul*, *Acts* 17.16, to 34. and *Ahab*, *Micaiah*, 1 *Kings* 22.8. Now these that will not hear an *untoothsome* truth, but turn their backs upon, and fly from instruction, *John* 3.19,20,21. not onely declare themselves to be *guilty persons* (for *he confesseth the fact, who so judgment turneth his back*: And 'tis onely the *weak sighted*, that cannot abide the *light*) but it proves them to be *out of all hope to become better*. For that sin is *past cure*, which turns *from*, and *refuseth the cure*, *Deut.* 17.12. *Prov.* 29.1. 1 *Sam.* 2.25. 2 *Chron.* 25.16. turn to the places. And take this for a *Rule*, if ever you see a *drowning man* *refuse help*, conclude him a *wilful murderer*.

Sett. 3. Fourthly and lastly, (for I pass by those blocks, that can hear the Word powerfully delivered for twenty or thirty years together, and mind no more the *spirituality of the matter*, than the *seats they sit on*, or the *stones they tread on*.) There are a Generation of hearers, who being told the naked truth, plainly reprov'd for their sins, shewn the judgments of God, and the due of what they deserve, and are like to undergo, if they go on, to the end they may *repent and believe*, that so they may be *saved*, will (*Ahab-like*) *carr*, and *fret*, and *chafe*, and *fume*, and *swell*, and *spurn* against the very *Word of God*, and be ready to *burst* again for being so *sharp and searbing*; and thereupon persecute the Messenger, as *Herodias* did *John*, and the *Pharisees*, *Christ*. They love application as dearly, as a Dog does a cudgel. So that like *Adders*, they are not onely *deaf* to the *Charmer*: but like *Slow-worms*, they *biss*, and then turn their *tails* to *sting* him.

Gods holy precepts and prohibitions *harden* them; as the *Sun* *hardens clay* and *water hot iron*. Or else they *inrage* them, as a *furious mastiff Dog*, is the *madder for his chain*. But when it comes to this, that men *spurn* at the means, and are *hardned* with the word as *Steel is hardned with strokes*; or as *Bulls* grow *mad* with *baizing*: the best way is to leave them to their *Judge*, who hath *messengers of wrath*, for them that despise the *messen-*

gers of his love, Psal. 81. 11, 12. See Luke 10. 10, 11. Prov. 29. & 1. 24, 25, 26, to 33. 2 Chron 25. 16, 20. 1 Sam. 2. 25. And in reason, *herbs* that are worse for *watering*, *trees* that are less fruitful for *digging*, *dunging*, *pruning*, are to be rooted out, or hewed down. And to admonish them is to no more purpose, than if one should speak to *lifeless stones*, or *senseless plants*, or *wileless beasts*: for they will never fear any thing, till they be in *Hell fire*. Wherefore God leaves them to be confuted with *fire and brimstone*, since nothing else will do it.

Sett. 4. Thus you see what a wonderful difference there is in Hearers! Onely herein they agree, all men (good and bad) love the light as it shines; but the most of men hate it, as it discovers and directs. But the difference is so great, that it is admirable to think, how some men would not be prevailed withall, though an *Angel* should be sent unto them from the dead: And yet with what small means some others have been converted, as were *Justin the Philosopher*, *Cyprian the Nicromancer*, *Saint Austin*, *Fulgentius*, *Francisco Junius*, *Melancthon*, *Adrianus*, *Lactimer*, and many others.

One treating upon the *Prodigal son*, and the *Thief upon the Cross*, mentions two famous strumpets, that were suddenly converted by this onely argument, that God seeth all things, even in the dark, when the doors are shut, and the Curtains drawn; and *Montaigne* tells of a Gallant, that (sporting with a *Curtizan* in a house of sin) happened to ask her name, which she said was *Mary*; whereat he was so stricken with reverence and remorse, that he instantly both cast off the Harlot, and amended his whole future life. And indeed, no means can be too weak where God intends success: yea, a thought onely hath sometimes served the turn. Nor needs there any more to a clarified understanding, than the bare thought of Gods Omnipresence, Omniscieny, or Omnipotency; as being present every where, knowing every thought and intent of the heart, and being Almighty to punish or reward evil and good.

Sett. 5. And so much of the kinds of hearers. Onely a Question or Scruple may hereupon arise. The Minister or Author, out of compassion to their precious souls, would shew them

to *Cornelius*, *Acts* 11. tell them that, whereby (with blessing from above) they might be saved, *verse* 14. the which some do kindly entertain, as *Lot* did those *Angels* that came to fetch him out of *Sodom*, *Gen.* 19. Others as charlishly reject, and as villainously entreat and handle them, as the *Ammonites* did *Dauids* messengers, *2 Sam.* 10. 4. Wherein (may some say) lies the difference?

Ans. I could give you sundry *Reasons* of it, I'll onely name a few, being injoynd so contract all my matter into two sheets.

First, *Will* makes the difference, and who makes the difference of *will*s, but he that made them? He that creates the new heart, leaves a *stone* in one bosom, puts flesh into another; and yet if *God* denies his grace, it is onely when he sees it contemned. As *God* oftentimes is so provoked, by their obstinate hardness and impenitency, that he gives them over to *Satan*, and up to the hardness of their own hearts, to be led by their lusts, and to walk in their own counsels; as it is, *Psal* 81. 12. *Rom.* 1. 24, 26. So that not *God*, but our selves, are the authors of *sin*, and of our own damnation, as it is, *Hos.* 13. 9. Of which, more in its due place.

Secondly, The holy *Word* of *God*, which is *Spirit* and *Life*, is so quick, powerful and operative, that it will have its effect: where it does not quicken, it kills. None ever heard it, but they were either better or worse by it. It is a holy fire; those whom it doth not purifie and cleanse, by melting into repentance, it doth consume and destroy by burning, into the ashes of prophane-ness here, of confusion hereafter. It is the power of *God* unto salvation, to every one that believeth, *Rom.* 1. 16. And a sweet savour of life unto life, to them that are saved, *2 Cor.* 2. 16. But it becomes the savour of death unto death, unto such as wrest and pervert the same to their own destruction, *2 Pet.* 3. 16. And no marvel, for the same cause may have divers and contrary effects in respect of sundry objects; as might be exemplified in the Sun, the wind, the same breath out of one mouth, the earth, the stomach, the rain, &c. as might be largely shewn. In one garden, grows an hundred kinds of herbs of several operations and qualities; some nutritive, others infective: yet they all draw their juyce

nourishment from the *stomack*; yea, the *same meat* in the *stomack*; but that which the *Liver* receives becomes *blood*, that which the *Gaul* receiveth becomes *cholar*, that which the *Lungs* receive becomes *steam*, and that which passeth into the *paps* becomes *milk*: So all receive the *same good Word of God*, but every one does not make the *same use* of it. For as one hath his *faith strengthened* by it, his *patience increased*, his *judgment rectified*, his *will reformed*, his *life and practice amended*, his *love and zeal inflamed*: so fares it with wicked men, in respect of the *contrary vices*, &c. Again, the *Word of God*, is like a *fructifying dew* or *rain*, which falls not upon any ground in vain. If these *Celestial showers*, fall into the *Garden* of a good heart, they raise up *herbs and flowers*; if in a *field* corn or *grass*; whereas if they fall on *clay*, they make but *dirt*; yea, the *more rain*, the *more dirt*: If upon *kennels*, or *dunghills*, a *stink*. Or if they produce any *fruit*, it is *weeds* instead of *herbs*; or perhaps *briars and thorns*, to scratch and wound the *Husbandman* that dresses it. Thus I might go on, and shew you how the *Sacrament of the Lords Supper*, is received by one to *salvation*, by another to his greater *damnation*, 1 Cor. 11. 29. The *cloudy pillar* which gave *light*, and was a *defence* to *Israel*, became *darkness* and *offence* to the *Egyptians*, Exod. 14. 20. And the like of *Manna*, Exod. 16. 20. The *Ark*, the *Red Sea*, and sundry the like which I might weary you with. Yea, *Christ* himself, who is a *Rock* to save all that believe in him, shivers his *enemies* in pieces, Mar. 21. 44. And *immortality*, the greatest *blessedness* of the *Saints*, is the greatest *misery* to the *damned*. No wonder then, if these *Spiders*, those *Bees*; the wicked and the godly, *suck* the one *honey*, the other *payson* from the self same *flower* of holy Writ.

SECT. 6. Thirdly, Another reason why they so swell against their reprehender, is their *guiltiness*. And it is a sure sign the *horse is gauled*, that stirs too much when he is touched. In the *Law of jealousies*, if the *suspected wife* were *guilty*, that drank of the bitter *waters of trial*, she would presently *swell*: if otherwise, she was well enough, Numb. 5. 27. Nor did you ever hear of any that were offended with wholsom truth for being untoothsom, that disliked the Minister for being too sharp and

to sick persons: so is good counsel to obstinate and resolved sinners. *Unsound flesh* loves to be stroaked, the least roughness puts it into a rage. *Bad wares* would have dark shops, *Thieves* will put out all the lights, that in the dark they may more securely rifle the house, *John* 3. 19 20, 21. So the conscience that is guilty of flagitious crimes, could wish the *Heavens* blind.

Fourthly, No wicked man can endure to hear the down-right truth: for then they must also hear the sentence of their own condemnation. What the Minister delivers is the very *Word* by which they are judged and condemned, therefore they loath as much to hear it, as the *Prisoner at the Bar* does abhor to hear his sentence from the just Judge. And indeed, if many (as we well know by experience) love not to hear the worst of their temporal causes and cases, nor yet of their bodily distempers, with which their lives or estates be endangered; how much more will wicked men decline from seeing their *hainous abominations*, and themselves guilty of *Hell* and *Eternal damnation*? though the e-
of, there be an absolute necessity, if ever they be saved.

Sect. 7. And so much of the *Reasons*. From all which we may learn not to impute the cause of *wicked mens raging* to any miscarriage in the messenger: for he may vindicate himself as *Paul* did *1 Cor* 7. 10. *I have not spoken, but the Lord.* And therefore as the *Lord* said unto *Saul*, *Acts* 9. 4. that he persecuted him: So they which reject any truth delivered out of the word, do resist *God himself*, and not his messenger. And this for certain, were *Christ himself* their Minister, they would much more oppose and persecute him, as the *Priests* and *Pharisees* did, when they heard him.

Yea, consider it rightly and you will grant, that there cannot be a greater *honour* done to a poor minister, than this. For, what says one of the *Fathers*? It may well be doubted that ministers open not the *Word* aright, when wicked men kick not against it. Yea, says *Luther*, To preach the Gospel as we ought, is to stir up all the *uries of Hell* against us. And what saith our Saviour himself to his *Apostles*, in their pupil-age? *The World cannot hate you but me it hateth; because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.* *John* 7. 7. And so touching *Paul*, who had never become their enemy, but for calling them to the truth.

and dealing so plainly, and so roundly with them. Nor can there be such an argument, that a *Minister Studies* more to profit, than to please men with his wholesome counsel; as when he will not let them sleep and snore in their sins, but cry aloud against their abominations.

Secondly, We may learn from the premises, that if any receive the Word with readiness, and become *new creatures* by hearing the same: not to attribute or ascribe the praise thereof to the parties converted, or to the means or to the instrument; but to God who is the *Author*, and gives the blessing. For Paul may plant, and Apollo may water, but it is God only that gives the increase. It is God alone that giveth words unto the wise, and vertue unto their words, 1 Cor. 3. 5, 6, 7. And he will give success to whom, when and as he pleaseth. Even twelve mean Fishermen, when he pleaseth, shall without force, or weapon, armour, bands of men or stroke stricken, subdue the whole world to their King: Hillary found not seventeen believers, and left not so many unbelievers in the whole City.

Indeed in these dayes, *Ministers* may tear their throats, spend their lungs, and force their sides, in suing to a deaf world, and say, when they have done all they can, *Who hath believed our reports? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* Yea, how many painful *Peters* have complained to fish all night, and catch nothing? Many professors, and few converts, hath been the lot of the Gospel in these last times, and since our means hath exceeded. Gods house (as the streets of Jericho) may be thronged, and yet but one *Zacheus* gained to the faith. And why so? but for this cause; If some few like the Bee, do gather from the Word, whatsoever addeth to their knowledge and vertue: the greatest number, use the same as some do artificial teeth, more for shew, than service; more for ability of discourse, than activity of practice; to talk of it, than to walk by it. Whence it is, that God utters his saving truths, as it were in Parables; so hiding them from the wise and prudent (namely the proud, that are wise in their own Eyes) and reveals them to babes and sucklings, (that is, the humble and lowly) as *Austin* speaks.

Ver. 8. Which being so, let not him that heareth, say, I have heard, and have not believed.

despise him that hath but *two*: Even those *great lights* of *Heaven*, the *Sun* and *Moon*, take not away the necessity of *lamp light*. To the making of the *Tabernacle*, *fine linnen*, and *Goats hair*, had their use; as well as *gold*, *silver*, and *precious stones*. And the same *God* that gave proportion to the *Cedar*, gave also being to the *Mushroom*.

Nor is the *strength* or *weakness* of *means*, either *spur* or *bridle* to the *determinate choises* of *God*; who not seldom does *greatest acts*, by *weakest Agents*. He chose *Dauids sling*, rather than *Sauls sword*, to conquer *Goliath*: *Frogs*, *Grasshoppers*, and *Lice*, rather than *Bears* and *Lions*, to fight against *Pharaoh*. Yea, he that with *Rams horns* overthrew the *walls* of *Jericho*, hath sometimes chosen *vile* and *weak means*, to serve himself by, in *great matters*. *Peter* hath a *Cock* to tell him of his *cowardise*. And *Balaam* an *Ass*, to reprove his *avarice*. Yea, that *God*, who will bless where he pleaseth; now and then gives the *greater success* to the *weaker means*. The *men* of *Nineveh* repented at the preaching of *Jonas*: yet not the *Jews*, at the preaching of *Christ*, who was greater than *Jonas*. The *Apostles* did greater signs in *Christs Name*, than *Christ himself*, *Joh. 14. 12*. It was a greater miracle, that the *shadow* of *St Peter* (as he walked in the street) should heal many sick persons, *Acts 5. 13, 16*. than that the *Hem* of *Christs vesture* should heal one single woman of her *blondy Issue*, *Mat. 9. 21, 22*. Who then can cavil, or indeed wonder, at the insuing story the which I am now to relate?

Yea, who that hath either *heart* or *brain*, shall well consider this preceding matter, and the *difference* of *Hearers*, and not be forced to acknowledge that which follows, to be the *case* of every one that shall hear it, be they what they will? I mean, before their hearts are renewed with the power of *Gods word*, which is the *strong arm* of the *Lord*, and the *mighty power* of *God* to *salvation*, *Rom. 1. 16*. And the *sword* of the *Spirit*, *Eph. 6. 17*. And like as a *fire*, or an *hammer* that breaketh even the *Rock* in pieces, *Jer. 23. 29, 30*. And that irresistible *Cannon-shot*, that is *mighty* to beat down all the *strong holds* of *sin* and *Satan*, *2 Cor. 10. 4*. Quick and powerful, and sharper than any *two-edged sword*, and pierceth even to the dividing assunder of the *Soul* and *Spirit*, and

thoughts; and most secret intents of the heart, Heb. 4. 12.

SECT. 9. And look to it, for if thou doest not see and acknowledge the *very secrets of thy heart* to be clearly laid open to thy conscience, in the one or other, first or last of these ensuing Characters: I dare peremptorily conclude, *That Satan the God of this world, hath blinded thy mind, that the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the Image of God, should not shine unto thee*, 2 Cor 4. 3, 4. Eph. 2. 2. 2 Thes. 2. 9, 10, 11. 1 Tim. 4. 2.

But this is the misery! and a just plague upon our *so much ignorance formality, and prophaness*, under our *so much means of grace*: there be very few men, that make not the *whole Bible*, and all the *Sermons* they hear: yea the *checks of their own Consciences*, and the *motions of Gods spirit* utterly *ineffectual*; for want of wit and grace, to *apply the same to themselves* as they can unto others; being better able to discern *others wotes*, than their *own beams*.

If you question what *Satan* can do in this case? Look upon what he hath done to others, as *wise*, and as *good*, as the best of us. He give you *instances*, both of the *godly* and *wicked*, and likewise *Testimonies*; I pray mind them seriously, and turn to the places, for they are exceeding considerable. In the first place, take notice, how he *blinded and deluded Ahabs four hundred Prophets*, 1 Kings 22. 22. And *Judas*, John 13. 2. And all *Magistrates*, when they *persecute the people of God*, Rev. 2. 10. And indeed all men in their natural estate; whereof not a few *think they do God good service, in persecuting and killing the Prophets*; as our *Saviour* expressly tells us, John 16. 2. But see other particular instances, as that of *Ananias and Saphira*, Acts 5. 3. Then for the *godly*, how he hath blinded and beguiled them, as our first *Parents, Adam and Eve*; *Eve by himself*, and *Adam by making her his instrument*; and that *in the state of innocency*, when they had *wit as will*, Gen. 3. And *holy David, a man after Gods own heart*, 1 Chron. 21. 1. Then *Peter*, who so dearly loved *Christ*, Mat. 16. 22, 23.

And having this done, argue thus with thy self; If *Satan* so blinded and befotted these; if he made such use of all these, whereof some were the best and wisest of *Gods children* and

Jude 23. Ephes. 5. 27. 2 Pet. 3. 14. James 1. 27. *Have the eye of faith, and the spirits direction, and know the mind of Christ above others,* 1 Cor. 2. 12, to 17. John 10. 14. How much more can he work the same upon his own children and servants? that delight onely in wickedness, and are ignorant of Satans wiles, as not having the least knowledge or ability to discern spiritual things, 1 Cor. 2. 14. 2 Cor. 4. 4.

But if you still question the truth of this, turn to *Joh. 14. 30.* and *12. 31.* *Gen. 3. 15.* *Joh. 8. 44.* *2 Tim. 2. 20.* *Eph. 2. 2, 3* which are such clear testimonies, that none (who *shut* not their eyes against the light) can gainsay, *Mat. 13. 15.*

Which being so, in reading this ensuing *Dialogue* or *Index of the heart,* Make the application to your selves and not to others; as David did *Nathans parable,* 2 Sam. 12. 1, to 8. And *Ahab the Prophets,* 1 Kings 20. 93, to 43. which yet concerned no less than their own lives. And so much the rather, for that in all probability, what this will not effect touching your amendment no ordinary means are like to do. As what can be further expected? No *glass* can more lively represent *your faces,* than this Book does your *hearts,* if you be yet in your *natural condition, unregenerate.* Neither can you look that *Christ Jesus* himself should call to you severally by name, as he did to *Saul,* for now we have the *Gospel* written at large: *Visions* and *Miracles* cease. Our pt case *Christ himself* should do so: I question whether you would be any more warned, or reclaimed by it, than *Hazael* was, when the *Prophet* told him, what abominable wickedness he should shortly commit, 2 Kings 8. 12, 13 &c. Yea, *Abraham* tells *Dives* the contrary, *Luke 13. 31.* And so I come to the *Conference* it self.

Sept. 10. A loose *Libertine* meeting with his friend that had lately been a *formal Christian,* he greets him as followeth:

Sir! Me thinks I have observed in you a strange alteration, since our last meeting at *Middleborough:* not onely in your behaviour, company, and converse; but even in your countenance: What is the matter, if I may be so bold?

Convert. Truly Sir, you are not at all mistaken, nor am I unwilling to acquaint you with the cause, if you can afford to

Soon after my return into *England*, I was carried by a friend to hear a *Sermon*, where the *Minister* so represented the very *thoughts*, *secrets*, and *deceitfulness* of my heart unto my conscience, that I could not but say of him, as the *Woman of Samaria* once spake of our *Saviour*: *He hath told me all things that ever I did.* Which made me conclude with that *unbeliever*, *1 Cor. 14. 24, 25.* *That God was in him of a truth*: nor could he ever have so done, if he were not of God, as the *Young man* in the *Gospel* reasoned with the *Pharisees*, touching *Jesus*, when he had opened his eyes that had been blind from his birth, *John 9. 32, 33.* Were upon I could have no peace nor rest, until I had further communed with him about my estate; for I found my self in a lost condition touching *Eternity*: It faring with me, as it did with those *Jews*, *Acts 2.* when *Peter* by his searching *Sermon* had convinced them, that *Christ*, whom they had by wicked hands crucified and slain, was the only Son of God, and Lord of glory, verse 36, 37. And having had the happiness to enjoy the benefit of his sage advice, as I stood in need thereof, (*God* having given him the tongue of the learned to administer a word in season to them that are weary, *Isa. 50. 4.*) I bless *God* his word and spirit hath wrought in me such a change and strange alteration, that it hath opened mine eyes that were blind before, inclined my will to obedience, which before was rebellious, softened my heart, sanctified, and quite changed my affections: so that I now love that good which before I hated, and hate that evil which before I loved; and am delighted with those holy exercises, which heretofore did most displease me; and am displeased with those vain pleasures and filthy sins which in times past did most delight me. Which is such a mercy, that no tongue is able to express! for till that hour, I went on in the broad way, and worlds road to destruction, without any mistrust; whereas now *God* hath been pleased to take me into his kingdom of grace here, & will never leave me, until he hath brought me to his kingdom of glory hereafter.

Loose Libersine. What you speak makes we wonder: for I ever held you the compleatest man of my acquaintance; just in all your dealings, temperate and civil in your deportment; yea, I have never seen you exceed in the least, nor heard you swear an oath, except faith and truth, and that very rarely. Besides you

have been a good *Protestant*, and gon to *Church* all your days.

Converts. What you speak, none that know me can contradict; nor could they ever accuse me of any scandalous crime, or unjust act. Yea, I had the same thoughts of my self; and should any one have told me formerly, that I was such a *great sinner*, such a *Devil incarnate* as I was! I should have replied as *Hazael* did to the *Prophet* (telling him of the abominable wickedness he would ere long commit) *What am I a Dog*, &c. 2 Kings 8. 12, 13. And no wonder, for as every man in his *natural condition* is *stark blind* to *spiritual objects*, 1 Cor. 2. 14. so the heart of man is *deceitful above all things*: even so deceitful, that none but God alone can know it, as the *Prophet* shews, *Jer.* 17. 10. But because this is a truth that transcends your belief, and because it may be of singular use to you also, to know the same: I will give you a short *character* of my former condition; the which done, I doubt not but you will assent unto what I have hitherto said, or shall further relate.

Self. 11. First, Touching my knowledge, (I mean *saving knowledge*, without which the *soul cannot be good*, as wise *Solomon* witnesseth, *Prov.* 19. 2.) it was such, though I thought my self wiser than to make scruple of, or perplex my self about matters of *Religion*, as do the *religions*: even as the King of *Tyrus* thought himself *wiser than Daniel*, *Ezek.* 28. 3. that *spiritual things* were mostly represented to my understanding false, and clean contrary to what they are indeed. Like *corporal things* in a *Looking-glass*, wherein those that are on the *right hand* seem to be on the *left*, and those that are on the *left hand* seem to be on the *right*. As it fared with *St. Paul*, while he was in his natural condition, *Acts* 26. 9. which made me think and call *evil*, good; and good, *evil*; *bitter*, *sweet*; and *sweet*, *bitter*; to *justify the wicked*, and *condemn the just*, as the *Prophet* complains, *Isa* 5. 20, 23.

As for instance, I most sottishly thought, that I both *loved* and *served God* as I ought; yea, I should have taken it in foul scorn, if any one had questioned the same; when indeed I was a *traytor to God*, and took up *armes* against all that did worship him in *spirit* and in *truth*. I was so far from *loving* and *serving him*, that I *hated* those that did it; and that for their so *doing*. I could

also hear him *blasphemed, reproached, and dishonoured*, without being once stirred or moved at it. I loved him dearly, but I could never afford to speak a word for him: and likewise his Children entirely; but instead of justifying them, or speaking in their defence when I heard them *scold, scorned and abused* by wicked and ungodly men; all my *delight* was to *jeer at, slight and slander* them wherever I came. I more *feared the Magistrate*, than I *feared God*, and more regarded the *blasts of mens breath*, than the *fire of Gods wrath*. I chose rather to *disobey God*, than to *displease great ones*; and feared more the *worlds scorns*, than *his anger*.

And the like of *Christ* that died for me; a strong argument that I *loved Christ*, when I *hated* all that resembled him in *holiness*. Yea, I so *hated holiness*, that I most bitterly *hated men* for being *holy*: insomuch that my *blood* would *rise* at the sight of a *good man*, as some *stomacks* will rise at the sight of *sweetmeats*. I was a *Christian in name*, but I could *scold* at a *Christian* indeed. I could honour the *dead Saints* in a formal profession, while I worried the *living Saints* in a cruel persecution. I condemned all for *Roundheads*, that had more Religion than a *Heathen*. or knowledge of *Heavenly things*, than a *child in the womb*. bath of the *things of this life*, or *Conscience* than an *Atheist*, or care of his *soul*, than a *Beast*. I had always the *basest thoughts* of the *best men*: making *ill constructions* of whatsoever they did or *spoke*; as the *Scribes and Pharisees* dealt by our *Saviour*.

Self. 12. As, O what a *poor slave* did I hold the man of a *tender conscience* to be! Yea, how did I applaud my self for being *zealless and fearless*; together with my great *discretion* and *moderation*: when I saw this man vexed for his *zeal*, that other *hated* for his *knowledge*, a third persecuted for the profession of his *Faith*, &c. For, (being like *Cain, Ishmael, Eliab, Michol, Pharaoh* and *Festus*) I thought their *Religion Puritanism*, their *conscience of sin, hypocrisie*; their *profession dissimulation*; their *prudence, policy*; their *faith and confidence, presumption*; their *zeal of Gods glory*, to be *pride and malice*; their *obedience to Gods laws, rebellion to Princes*; their *execution of justice, cruelty* &c. If they were any thing devout, or forward to admonish others, that so they might *pluck them out of the fire*: I conceived them

have beside themselves, as our Saviour was thought to be by his Kinsfolk, and St. Paul by Festus. Mark 3. 21. John 10. 20. Acts 26. 24. 1 Cor. 1. 18. My religion was to oppose the power of religion, and my knowledge of the truth, to know how to argue against the truth. I never affected Christs Ambassadors, that preached the glad tidings of salvation, but had a spleen against them; yea, I hated a Minister for being a Minister, especially if a godly and zealous one, that spake home to my conscience, and told me of my sins; much more if he would not admit me to the Lords Table without trial, and examination; yea, then like Ahab to Eliab, I became his enemy, and hated him ever after; would impeach his credit, and detain from him his dues. And are not all these strong evidences, that I loved and served God, and my Redeemer as I ought? But to make it more manifest, what a rare Christian I was.

I thought my self a Believer; yea, I could boast of a strong Faith, when yet I fell short of the very Devils in believing: for they believe the threats and judgments contained in the Word, and tremble thereat, James 2. 19. Whereas I thought them but Scare-crows to fright the simple withal: yea, I held Hell it self but a fancy, not worth the fearing.

Because I was not notoriously wicked, but had a form of godliness, was civil, &c. I was able to delude my own soul, and put off all reproofs and threatenings, by comparing my self with these, that I presumed were worse than my self; as Drunkards, Adulterers, Blasphemers, Oppressors, shedders of blood, and the like; counting none wicked but such. Yea, looking upon these, I admired my own holiness, and thought my moral honesty would be sufficient to save me. Nor did I know wherein I had offended.

And whereas the Law is spiritual, and binds the heart from affecting no less than the hand from acting: I was so blind and ignorant, that I thought the Commandment was not broken, if the outward gross sin be forborn. Whence these were my thoughts; I never brake the first Commandment of having many gods: for I was no Papist, nor Idolater: nor the second, for I worshipped God aright. Nor the third, for I had been no common swearer, onely a few petty oaths. Nor the fourth for I had every Sabbath

gone duly to Church. Nor the *fifth*, for I ever honoured my parents and have been a *loyal subject*. Nor the *sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, or tenth*; for I never committed *murder or adultery*, never *stole* ought, never *bore false witness*; nor could I call to mind that I had at any time *coveted my neighbours wife, servant, estate, &c.* And nothing more common with me, than to brag of a *good heart and meaning*, of the strength of my *faith and hope*, of my *just and upright dealing*, &c. And because I obtained from notorious sins, I thought my self an excellent Christian, if God was not beholding to me for not wounding his Name with Oaths, for not drinking & playing out his *sabbaths*, for not railing on his *ministers*, for not oppressing & persecuting his *poor members*, &c. Sect. 13. And yet had it been so; as I imagined: Admit I had never offended in the least all my life, either in thought, word, or deed; yet this were but one half of what I owe to God, this were but to observe the *negative part* of his law, still the *affirmative part* thereof I had been so far from performing, that I had not so much as thought of it. And to be just in the sight of God, and graciously accepted of him; these two things are required: the *satisfactory part* to escape hell, and the *meritorious part* to get heaven. And the true method of grace is, *Cease to do evil, learn to do well*, Isa. 1. 16, 17. The *Fig tree* was *cursed*, not for bearing *evil fruit*, but because it *bore no good*. The *evil servant* was not *bound hand and foot*, and *cast into prison*, for *wasting his masters goods*; but for *not gaining with them*. And those *reprobates* at the last day shall be *bid depart into everlasting fire*; not for *wronging or robbing of any*, but for *not giving*, for *not comforting Christs poor members*, Mat. 25. So that my case was most desperate! For though with that *Pharisee*, Luk. 18. 11. I was apt to thank God, and brag, that I was *just*, and *paid every man his due*, yet I never thought of being *holy*, and of *paying God his dues*; as his due of *believing*, or *repenting*, of *new obedience*; his due of *praying*, *hearing*, *confessing*, *meditating on his word and works*, *sanctifying his Sabbaths*, and *instructing my children & servants*, teaching them to fear the Lord. His due of *love, fear, thankfulness, zeal for his glory, charity and mercy to Christs poor members*, and the like.

I should have serv'd God in spirit, & according to Christs gospel: on all that are *wise hearted* endeavour to *live, & believe, & hear*

and invoke, and hope, and fear, and love, and worship God in such manner as his word prescribes. I should have been effectually called, and become a new creature by regeneration, being begotten and born anew, by the immortal seed of the word. I should have found an apparent change wrought in my judgment, affections, and actions, to what they were formerly. The Old-man should have changed with the New-man, worldly wisdom with Heavenly wisdom, carnal love with spiritual love, servile fear for Christian and Filial fear, idle thoughts for holy thoughts, vain words for holy and wholesome words, fleshly works for works of righteousness: even hating what I formerly loved, and loving what I formerly hated.

But alas! I have heard the Gospel day after day, and year after year: which is the strong arm of the Lord, and the mighty power of God to salvation. That is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, and yet stood it out and resisted, instead of submitting to Christs call; even refusing the free offer of Grace and Salvation. I have heard the Word faithfully and powerfully preached for forty years, yet remained in my natural condition unregenerate, without which new birth there is no being saved, as our Saviour affirms, *John 3.5*. I had not trodden one step in the way to conversion; for the first part of conversion, is to love them that love God, *1 John 3.10.11.14*. I should daily have grown in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: but I was so far from growing in grace, that I had not one spark of grace or holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord, *Heb. 12.14*. I was all for observing the second Table, without respect to the first; or all for outward conformity, not at all for spiritual and inward holiness of the heart.

Sect. 14. Either what I did was not morally good for the matter, or not well done for the manner; nor to any right ends: as out of duty and thankfulness to God and my Redeemer, and out of love to my fellow-members. Without which, the most glorious performances, and the rarest virtues, are but shining fens, or beautiful abominations. Gods glory was not my principal end, nor to be saved my greatest care.

I was a good civil, moral honest hypocrite, or infidel; but now

of these graces grew in the garden of my heart. I did not shine out as a light, by a holy conversation to glorifie God, and win others. Now onely to refrain evil, except a man hates it also, and does the contrary good, is to be evil still: because honesty without piety, is but a body without a soul.

All my Religion was either superstition or formality, or hypocrisy. I had a form of Godliness, but denied the power thereof: I often drew near unto God with my mouth, and honoured him with my lips, but my heart was far from him, Isa. 25. 13. Mark 7. 2, to 14. Mat. 15. 7, to 10. All which considered. viz. the means which God had afforded me, and the little use I had made thereof, left me in a far worse condition, then the very Heathen that never heard of Christ. So that it was Gods unspeakable mercy, that I am not at this present frying in Hell flames, never to be freed.

God hath sent unto us all his servants the Prophets, rising up early, and they have been instant in preaching the Gospel, both in season, and out of season: but my carnal heart hath ever been flint unto God, wax unto Satan: You shall die if you continue in the practice of sin, I heard: but you shall not dye, (as saith the Devil) I believed.

Self. 15. Besides all this, Suppose I had none of these to answer for; neither sins of Commission, nor sins of Omission: yet Original sin were enough to damn me, no need of any more; and yet my actual transgressions have been such, and so many, and my ingratitude therein so great, that it might have sunk me down with shame, and left me hopeless of ever obtaining pardon for them. As see but some small part of my monstrous and devilish ingratitude to so good a God, so loving and merciful a Saviour and Redeemer, that hath done, and suffered so much for me, even more than can either be expressed or conceived, by any heart, were it as deep as the Sea!

Touching what God and Christ hath done for me; in the first place he gave me my self, and all the creatures to serve for my use; yea, he created me after his own image in righteousness and holiness, and in perfect knowledge of the truth, with a power to stand, and for ever to continue in a most blessed and happy condition. But this was nothing in comparison; for when I

was in a sad condition; when I had forfeited all this, and my self; when by sin I had turned that *image of God* into the *image of Satan*, and wilfully plunged my *soul and body* into *Eternal torments*: when I was become his *enemy*, mortally *hating* him, and to my utmost *fighting against him*, and taking part with his onely enemies *Sin and Satan*, not having the least thought or desire of *reconcilement*, but a perverse and obstinate will to resist all means tending thereunto: he did *redeem me*, not onely without asking, but even against my vwill; so making of me his *curled enemy*, a *servant*; of a *servant* a *son*; of a *son* an *heir*, and *coheir with Christ*. Gal. 4. 7. But how have I *requited* this so great, so superlative a *mercy*? All my recompence of *Gods love unto me*, hath been to do that which he *hates*, and to *hate* those whom he *loves*.

Christ the fountain of all good, is my *Lord* by a manifold right, and I his *servant* by all manner of obligations. First, he is my *Lord* by the right of *creation*, as being his *workmanship* made by him. Secondly, by the right of *Redemption*, being his purchase bought by him. Thirdly, of *preservation* being kept, upheld, and maintained by him. Fourthly, his by *Vocation*, even of his family, having admitted me a *member of his visible Church*. Fifthly, his also (had it not been my own fault) by *sanctification*, whereby to poss. is me. Lastly, he would have me of his *Court* by *glorification*, that he might *crown me*, so that I was every way his. *God* had raised me from a *beggar* to a *great estate*: But how did I requite him? I would not, if possible, suffer a *godly and conscientious minister* to be *chosen*, or to abide where I had to do, but to bring in one that would *flatter sin*, and *flout holiness*, discourage the *godly*, and *incourage the wicked*. I used both *my own*, and all *my friends* utmost ability. Much more might be mentioned, but I fear to be tedious.

Now argue with *all the world*, and they will conclude, that there is *no vice like ingratitude*! But I have been more ungrateful to *God*, than can be *expressed* by the *best Oratour alive*. It was horrid ingratitude in the *Jews*, to scourge and crucifie *Christ*, who did them good every way; for he *healed their diseases* fed *their bodies*, *enlightened their minds*, of *God* became *man*, and lived miserably amongst them many years, that he might *save* their

souls: but they fell short of my ingratitude to *God* in that most of them were not in the least convinced, that he was the *Messias* sent from *God*, and promised from the beginning. But I have not onely denied this *Lord* that bought me, but I hated him; yea, most spitefully and maliciously fought on *Satan* and *Sins* side against him, and persecuted his children, and the truth with all my might: and all this against *knowledge* and *conscience*, after some measure of *illumination*, which cannot be affirmed of the *Jews*. Yet miserable wretch that I was, if I could have given him my body and soul, they should have been saved by it, but he were never the better for them.

Self. 16. Lastly, to tell you that which is more strange! Notwithstanding all this that hath been mention'd, and much more: Yet I thought my self a good *Christian* forsooth; yea, with that young man in the Gospel, I thought I had kept all the *Commandments*. Nor was I a whit troubled for sin, either *original* or *actual*, but my *conscience* was at quiet, and I was at peace; neither did any sin trouble me. Yea, I would applaud my self with that *Pharisee*, Luke 18. 9. to 15. and say, I was not like other men: not once doubting of my salvation. I ever refused to do what my *Maker* commanded, and yet confidently hoped to escape what he threatened. Nor did I doubt of having *Christ* my Redeemer and Advocate in the next life, when I had been a bitter enemy to him and his members in this life. Here was blindness with a witness; as it is not to be believed how blind & blockish men are, that have onely the *flesh* for their guide; especially if they have hardened their hearts, and seared their consciences with a customary sinning. As I could give you for instance, a large catalogue of rare Examples, how sin hath besotted men, and what stark fools carnal men are in spiritual things, be they never so wise for mundane knowledg. But lest it should be taken for a digression or excursion, you shall have a list of them by themselves, the which I will add as an Appendix to this Discourse, or Dialogue. In the mean time I have given you a brief of my manifold provocations, and great ingratitude, to my *Maker* and Redeemer (for otherwise I might be endless in the prosecution thereof.) It remains that I should in like manner

former (whether sins of *commission*, or sins of *omission*) do flow. But touching it, be pleased to peruse that small Tract, intituled, *A short and sure way to Grace and Salvation: Or, Three Fundamental Principles of Christian Religion*, by R.T. from p.4. to p.10.

Secl. 17. Loose Libertine. If this hath been your case, no wonder it hath startled you; for to deal plainly with you, as you have done with me; what I have heard from you, makes me tremble. For if such *honest moral men*, that live so *unreproveably* as you have done, go not to *Heaven*, what will become of me, that have been so *openly prophane*, and *notoriously wicked* all my time? Yea, it contented me not to do wickedly my self, and to damn my own soul, but I have been the occasion of drawing hundreds to hell with me, by seducing some, and giving ill example to others, (the *infection of sin*, being much worse than the *act*.) As how many have I drawn to be *drunkards*, and *swearers*, and *whoremongers*, and *prophane persons*? Insomuch, that the blood of so many souls, as I have drawn away, will be required at my hands. Yea, my life hath been so debauch'd and licentious, that I have brought a *scandal upon the Gospel*, and made it odious to the very *Turks* and *Infidels*, Rom 2.24.

Convert. Alas! what I did that was morally good, or what evil I refrained, was more for self-ends, or for fear of mens Laws, than for love of Christs Gospel. True, I went under the notion of an *honest man*, and a good Christian: I was baptized into the Faith, and made a *member of Christs visible Church*; but I was so far from endeavouring to perform what I then promised, that in effect I even renounced both Christ, and my Baptism, in persecuting him, and all that sincerely professed his Name, thinking I did God good service therein, John 16.2. Gal. 1.13, 14. Phil. 3. 6. Nor was it for want of ignorance, that you thought so of me: for by nature (be we never so mild and gentle) we are all the seed of the serpent, Gen. 3.15. and children of the Devil, John 8.44. Yea, the very best moral man, is but a tame Devil, as *Athanasius* well notes. But it is a true Proverb, *The blind eat many a Fly*, and all Colours are alike to him that is in the dark.

Loose Libertine. So much the worse is my condition; for my conscience tells me, there is not a word you have spoken of

great deal more; for whereas you have been a *moral honest man*, so that none except your self, could tax you for breaking either *Gods Law*, or *mans*: I have been so *wicked*, and *prophane*, that I could most presumptuously, and of set purpose, take a *pride in my wickedness*, commit it with *greediness*, speak of it, defend it, joy in it, boast of it, tempt, and inforce to it; yea, mock them that disliked it. As if I would send challenges into Heaven, and make love to destruction, and yet did applaud my self, and prefer my own condition before other mens: saying, I was no dissembler; yea, I hated the hypocrisy of *Professors*: I do not justify my self, and despise others, like the *Puritans*: I am not factious, schismatical, singular, censorious, &c. I am not rebellious, nor contentious, like the *Brownists* and *Anabaptists*. I am a *good fellow*, and love an *honest man* with my heart, &c. and as touching a *good conscience*, I was never troubled in mind, as many scrupulous fools are. I have a *good heart*, and mean as well as the *precisest*. But now I see the *Devil* and my own *deceitful heart* deluded me so, that my *whole life* hitherto, hath been but a *dream*, and that like a *blind man*, I was running headlong to *Hell*, when yet I thought my self in the way to *Heaven*. Just as if a *Beggar* should dream that he were a *King*; or as if a *Traitor* should dream of his being *Crowned*, when indeed he was to be *beheaded*; the case of *Laodicea*, Rev. 3. 17. the *young man* in the *Gospel*, Luke 18. 20, 21. and that *Pharisee*, spoken of, Luke 18. 11, 12.

Self. 18. Convert. It was not your case alone, but so it fares with the worst of sinners: Onely it much rejoices me, that it hath pleased *God* to open your eyes, to see all this in your self. For *flesh and blood* hath not revealed it unto you. Yea, we are *naturally* so *blind*, and *deaf*, and *dead in sin*, and in *soul*, that we can no more discern our *spiritual filthiness*, nor feel *sin* to be a *burden*, than a *blind Ethiopian* can see his own *blackness*, or then a *dead man* can feel the weight of a *burden*, when it is laid upon him, Acts 28. 27. Isa. 6. 9, 10.

And this common experience shews; for if you observe it, who more *jocund*, *confident*, and *secure*, than the worst of sinners? They can strut it under an unsupportable mass of *Oaths*, *Blasphemies*, &c.

the like sins; yea, can easily swallow these spiders with *Mishrides*, and digest them too: when one that is regenerate shrinks under the burden of wandering thoughts, and want of proficiency. But why is it? They are dead in sin, Ephes. 2. 1. Revel. 3. 1. Now lay a mountain upon a dead man, he feels not once the weight.

To a Christian that hath the life of grace, the least sin lies heavy upon the conscience! but to him that is dead, let his sins be as heavy as a mountain of lead, he feels in them no weight at all.

Again, they are insensible of their sin and danger, because ignorant; for, for what the eye seeth not, the heart reacheth not. Security makes worldlings merry, and therefore are they secure, because they are ignorant. A dunce, we know, seldom makes doubts: Yea, a fool, says Solomon, boasteth, and is confident, Prov. 14. 16. neither do blind men ever blush. And the truth is, were it not for pride and ignorance a world of men would be ashamed to have their faces seen abroad. For take away from mens minds vain opinions, flattering hopes, false valuations, imaginations, and the like; you will leave the minds of most men and women, but poor shrunken things, full of melancholy, indisposition, and displeasing to themselves. Ignorance is a veil or curtain to hide away their sins, whereupon they are never troubled in conscience, nor macerated with cares about eternity; but think that all will be well.

The Devil and the Flesh prophesie prosperity to sin; yea, life and salvation, as the Pope promised the Powder Traitors: but Death and Damnation (which Gods Spirit threatens) will prove the crop they will reap. For God is true, the Devil and all Flesh are liars.

When we become regenerate, and forsake sin; then the devil strongly and strangely assaults us: as he did Christ when he was newly baptized; and Pharaoh the children of Israel, when they would forsake Egypt, and Herod the children, when Christ was come to deliver his people. Whence commonly it comes to pass, that those think best of themselves, that have least cause; yea, the true Christian, is as fearful to entertain a good opinion of himself, as the false is unwilling to be driven from it. They that have store of grace mourn for the want of it, and they that

their *Adoption*, as they that may be *assured* of it: nor none more usually *fear* then they that have the greatest *cause to hope*. We feel *corruption*, not by corruption, but by *Grace*, and therefore the more we *feel* our inward *corruption*, the more *Grace* we have.

Contraries, the nearer they are one to another, the sharper is the conflict betwixt them. Now of all Enemies, the *Spirit* and the *Flesh* are nearest one to another, being both in the *Soul* of a regenerate man, and in all *faculties* of the soul, and in every *action* that springeth from those *faculties*. The more *Grace*, the more *Spiritual* life; and the more *Spiritual* life, the more antipathy to the contrary; whence none are so *sensible* of corruption, as those that have the most *Living Souls*.

Self. 19. Now for *Remedy* of the contrary, there cannot be a better *lesson* for carnal men to learn, than this. All the *promises* of *God* are *conditional*, to take place, if we *repent*; as all the *threatnings* of *God* are *conditional*, to take place, if we *repent not*. But wicked men, as they *believe without repenting*; their *Faith* being meer *presumption*: so they *repent without believing*, their repentance being indeed *Desperation*: and this observe, we are *cast down* in the disappointment of our hopes, in the same *measure*, as we were too much lifted up, in expectation of *good* from them. Whence these peremptory presumers, if ever they *repent*, it is commonly as *Francis Spira*, an *Advocate* of *Padua*, did: and never did any man plead so well for *himself*, as he did *against himself*.

One *Star* is much *bigger* than the *Earth*, yet it seems many *degrees less*. It is the nature of *fear* to make *dangers* greater, *helps* less than they are. *Christ* hath promised *peace* and *rest* unto their souls that *labour*, and are *heavy laden*, and to those that *walk according to rule*, *Mat. 11. 29.* *Gal. 6. 16.* even *peace celestial* in the *state of grace*, and *peace eternal* in the *state of glory*. Such therefore as never were distressed in conscience, or live loosely, never had true *peace*. *Peace* is the *Daughter* of *Righteousness*, *Rom. 5. 1.* *Being justified by faith, we have peace with God*. But he who makes a *Bridge* of his own *shadow*, will be sure to *fall*

Those *blocks*, that never in their life were moved with *Gods* *threatnings*, never in any streight of conscience, never groaned under the burden of *Gods* *anger* : they have not so much as entered into the porch of *this house*, or lift a foot over the *threshold* of *this school of repentance*. Oh ! that we could but so much fear the *Eternal* pains, as we do the *temporary* : and be but so careful to save our *souls* from torment, as our *bodies*. In the mean time, the case of these men is so much the worse, by how much their *fear* is the less. It faring with the *soul*, as with the *body*, Those *diseases*, which do take away all sense of *pain*, are of all others *most desperate*. As the *dead palse*, the *falling sickness*, the *sleepy lethargy*, &c. And the *patient* is *most dangerously sick*, when he hath *no feeling* thereof. In like manner, whilest they suppose themselves to be free from *judgment*, they are already smitten with the *heaviest of Gods judgments*, a heart that cannot repent, *Rom. 2. 5.*

In a *Lethargy*, it is needful the *Patient* should be cast into a *burning Feaver*, because the *senses* are *benumbed*, and this will *waken them*, and *dry up* the *besotting humours*. So in our dead security, before our conversion, *God* is fain to let the *Law*, *Sin*, *Conscience*, and *Satan* loose upon us, and to kindle the very *fire of Hell* in our souls, that so we might be roused out of our security : but thousands of these *blocks* both live and depart with as great hopes, as men go to a *Lottery*, even *dreaming of Heaven*, until they *awake* in *Hell*. For they too often die without any remorse of conscience, like *blocks*; or as an *Ox* dies in a *disch*. Yea, thousands that live like *Laban*, die like *Nabal*, (which is but the same word inverted) whilest others, the dear children of *God*, die in distress of *Conscience*. For it is not every good mans hap to die like *Antoninus Pius*, whose death was after the fashion and semblance of a kindly and *pleasant sleep*. However *St. Austins* rule will be sure to hold, He cannot *die ill*, that hath *lived well*; and for the most part, He that *lives conscionably*, *dies comfortably*, and departeth rich. And so you see how it fares with the wickedest and worst of men. Wherefore if you are truly sensible of your *vvretchedness*, it is a good sign, that you are in some forwardness to be recovered : and really to be-
 come good, as some of you but dreamed, or imagined your

self to be. And indeed the very first step to grace, is to feel the want of grace, and the next way to receive mercy, is to see your self miserable. Therefore our constant and most diligent search should be to find out the naughtiness of our own hearts; and to get strength from God against our prevailing corruptions.

Self. 20. Loose Libertine. But is there any hope for one so wicked as I? vvhho have turned the grace of God into wantonness, applying *Christs passion* as a warrant for my licentiousness, not as a remedy, and taking his death as a license to sin, his Cross as a Letters patent to do mischief. As if a man should head his drum of rebellion with his pardon. For I have most spitefully, and maliciously taken up Arms against my Maker, and fought against my Redeemer all my dayes.

Convert. Do but unfeignedly repent you of your sins, and forsake your former evil wayes, and lay hold upon Christ by a true and lively faith; my soul for yours, God is very ready to forgive them, be they never so many, and innumerable for multitude; never so hainous for quality and magnitude. Yea, I can shew you your Pardon from the great King of Heaven, for all that is past, the vvhich you may read at large, *Isa. 55. 7 Ezek. 18. 21, to 29. and 33. 11. Joel 2. 12, 13, 14.* Yea, read *1 Cor. 6. 10, 11.* together with the story of *Manasses, Mary Magdalen, the Thief, and the Prodigal Son*; and you shall see presidents thereof. Yea, the very murderers of the Son of God, upon their serious and unfeigned repentance, and stedfast believing in him, received pardon and salvation. And indeed despair is a sin which never knew *Jesus*. True every sin deserves damnation; but no sin shall condemn, but the lying and continuing in it. True repentance is ever blest with forgiveness. And know this, that Gods mercy is greater than thy sin, whatever it be: you cannot be so infinite in sinning, as he is infinite in pardoning, if you repent; yea, sins upon repentance are so remitted, as if they had never been committed. *I will put away thy transgressions as a cloud, and thy sins as a mist, Isa. 44. 22.* And what by corruption hath been done, by repentance is undone. As the former examples witness. Come let us Reason together, saith the Lord, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be

Prophet *David*, laying open his *blood guiltiness*, and his *original impurity*, useth these words, *Purge me with Hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow*, *Psal.* 51.7. And in reason, did *Christ* come to call sinners to repentance? and shall he not shew mercy to the penitent? Or, who would not cast his burden upon him, that desires to give ease? As *I live*, saith the Lord, *I would not the death of a sinner*, *Ezek.* 18.32. and 33.11.

Onely, apply not this *salve*, before the ulcer be searched to the bottome: Lay not hold upon *mercy*, until thou be'st thoroughly *humbled*. The onely way to become good, is, first to believe that you are evil, and by accusing our selves, we prevent *Satan*; by judging our selves, we prevent *God*.

Are we as sick of sorrow, as we are of sin? Then may we hopefully go to the *Physician of our Souls*, who came into the World onely to cure the sick, and to give light to them onely, who sit in darkness, and in the shadow of Death. *God* does not pour the *Oyl of Grace*, but into a broken and contrite Heart.

Wouldst thou get out of the miserable estate of Nature, into the blessed estate of Grace? and of *Sinners bond-vice*, become the *Child of God*, and a *Member of Christ*? Wouldst thou truly know thine own Heart? and be very sensible how evil and wicked it is? that so thou mayest have a more humble conceit of thy self? Lay to heart these three particulars: 1. The corruption of our nature, by reason of *original sin*. 2. Our manifold breach of *Gods Righteous Law*, by *actual sin*. 3. The guilt and punishment due to us for them both. This being done, thou wilt see and finde thy necessity of a Redeemer. And it is *Thirst* onely that makes us relish our Drink, Hunger our meat: The full Stomack of a Pharisee, surcharged with the superfluities of his own Merits, will loath the *Heavy-cord* of *Christs Righteousness*. This was it which made the *Young Prodigal* to relish even servants fare, though before wanton, when fall fed at home. No more relish feels the *Pharisaical heart* in *Christs blood*, than in a chip: But O how acceptable is the *Fountain of living waters*, to the thirsted Heart panting and braving? The blood of *Christ*, to the weary and tired soul; to the thirsty Conscience scorched with the sense of *Gods wrath*: He that presents him with it, how welcome is he? even as a special choice man, one of a thousand. And the deeper the sense of Misery is, the sweeter the sense of Mercy is.

Self. 21. Then if you would be satisfied for time to come, whether your Repentance and Conversion be true and sound, these particulars will infallibly inform you. If you shall persevere (when this trouble for sin is over) in doing that which now you purpose, it is an infallible signe your Repentance is sound, otherwise not. If thou doest call to minde the Vow which thou madest in Baptism, and doest thy endeavour to perform that which then thou didst promise. If thou doest square thy life according to the Rule of *Gods Word*, and not after the *Customs* of the World. If thou art willing to forsake all sin, without reserving one, (for otherwise that

sons, and but one Bastard, and yet that Bastard destroyed all the rest that were legitimate, *Judg. 9. 5.*) Sin is like the Ivy in the wall, cut off bough, branch, body, stump, yet some Sprigs or other will sprout out again: Till the Root be pluckt up, or the wall be pulled down and ruined, it will never utterly die.

Regeneration or New-birth, is a creation of new qualities in the soul; as being by nature onely evil disposed. Gods children are known by this mark, *They walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit, Rom. 8. 1.* If Christ have called you to his service, your life will appear more spiritual and excellent than others.

As for your fails, it is a sign that sin hath not gained your consent, but committed a Rape upon your Soul, when you cry out to God. If the ravished Virgin under the Law cryed out, she was pronounced guiltless. A sheep may fall into the mire, but a swine delights to wallow in the mire. Great difference between a woman that is forced, though she cries out and strives, and an alluring Adulteress.

Again, the thoughts of the godly, are godly, of the wicked, worldly; and by these, good and evil men are best, and truest differenced one from another. Would we know our own hearts, and whether they be changed by a new birth: Examine we our thoughts, words, actions, passions, especially our thoughts will inform us, for these cannot be subject to hypocrisy, as words and deeds are.

Secl. 22. Then by way of Caution, know, That a Child may as soon create it self, as a man in the state of nature, regenerate himself. We cannot act in the least, unless God bestows upon us daily privative grace to defend us from evil, and daily positive grace, enabling us to do good. And those that are of Christs teaching, know both from the Word, and by Experience, that of themselves they are not onely weak, but even dead to what is good, moving no more than they are moved; that their best works are faulty, all their sins deadly, all their Natures corrupted originally. You hath he quickned, that were dead in trespasses and sins, *Eph. 2. 1.* Yea, we are altogether so dead in sin, that we cannot stir the least joynt, no not so much as feel our own deadness, nor desire life, except God be pleased to raise and restore our souls, from the death of sin, and grace of long custom, to the life of grace. Apt we are to all evil, but reprobate and indisposed to all Grace and Goodness; yea, to all the means thereof.

*My Powers are all corrupt, corrupt my will:
Marble to good, but Wax to what is ill.*

Inasmuch, that we are not sufficient of our selves to think, much less to speak, least of all to do that which is good, *2 Cor. 3. 5. John 15. 4, 5.* If we have power to chuse or refuse the object, to do these well we have no power. We have ability, we have will enough, to undo our selves, scope enough Hell-ward; but neither motion, nor will to do good, that must be put into us by him that gives both power and will, and power to will.

Finally, Each sanctified heart feels this, but no words are able sufficiently to express, what impotent wretches we are, when we are not sustained. So that we have *no merit*, but the *mercy of God* to save us : nothing but *the blood of Christ*, and his mediation to cleanse and Redeem us : nothing but *his obedience* to enrich us. As for our good works, we are altogether beholding to God for them, not God to us, nor we to our selves, because they are only *his works in us*.

Whatsoever thou art, thou owe'st to him that made thee : whatever thou hast, thou owe'st to him that Redeemed thee. Therefore if we do any thing amiss, let us *accuse our selves* : if any thing well, let us give all the praise to God. And indeed, this is the test of a true or false Religion : that which teacheth us to exalt God most, and most to depress our selves is the true : that which doth most *prank up* our selves, and detract from God, is the false, as Boaventura well notes.

Self. 23. Now to wind up with a Word of Exhortation ; If thou beest convinced, and resolvest upon a new course ; let thy resolution be peremptory and constant, and take heed you harden not again, as Pharaoh, the Philistines, the Young man in the Gospel, Pilate and Judas did : resemble not the Iron, which is no longer soft, than it is in the Fire ; for that good (saith Gregory) will do us *no good*, which is not made good by perseverance. If with these premonitions, the Spirit hath vouchsafed to stir up in thine heart any good motions, and holy purposes to obey God, in letting thy sins go ; *Quench not*, grieve not the Spirit, 1 Thel. 5. 19. Return not with the Dog to thy vomit, least thy latter end prove seven-fold worse than thy beginning, Mat. 12. 43, 45. Oh it is a fearful thing to receive the grace of God in vain ! and a desperate thing, being warned of a Rock, wilfully to cast our selves upon it. Neither let Satan persuade you to defer your repentance ; no not an hour, lest your Resolution proves as a false conceit, which never comes to bearing. Besides, death may be sudden : even the least of a thousand things can kill you, and give you no leisure to be sick.

Thirdly, If thou wilt be safe from evil works, avoid the occasions ; have no fellowship with the workers of iniquity : neither fear their scoffes ; for this be sure of, if your person and wayes please God, the world will be displeased with both : If God be your friend, men will be your enemies : if they exercise their malice, it is where he shews mercy. But take heed of losing Gods favour to keep theirs.

Beda tells of a Great man, that was admonished by h's friends in his sickness to repent : who answered, He would not yet ; for that if he should recover, h's friends and companions would laugh at him : but growing sicker and sicker, they again press him ; but then his answer was, That it was now too late ; for I am judged and condemned already.

A man cannot be a Nathanael, in whose heart there is no guile, but the World count him a fool. But Christ saies, *Ventily except ye be converted, and become as little Children*, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, Matth. 18. 3.

Again, *Satan* and your deceitful heart will suggest unto you, that a *Religious life*, is a *dumpish and melancholy life*: but holy *David* will tell you, *That light is sown to the Righteous, and joy to the Upright*, *Psal. 97. 11. Isa. 65. 14.* And experience tells us, that *Earthly and Bodily joyes*, are but the *body*, or rather the *dregs* of that joy, which *Gods* people feel and are ravished with. As Oh the calm, and quietness of a good Conscience! the assurance of the pardon of sin, and joy in the Holy Ghost, the honesty of a virtuous and holy life, how sweet they are! Yea, even *Plato*, an *Heathen* could say, That if *Wisdom* and *Virtue* could but represent it self to the Eyes, it would set the heart on fire with the love of it. And the like of a sinners sadness, as hear what *Seneca* sayes; If there were no *God* to punish him, no *Devil* to torment him, no *Hell* to burn him, no *man* to see him; yet would he not sin, for the ugliness and filthiness of sin, and the guilt and sadness of his Conscience. But Experience is the best informer: wherefore take the counsel of holy *David*, *Psal. 34. 8. O taste and see! that the Lord is good, blessed is the man that trusteth in him.* To which accordeth that of holy *Bernard*, *Good art thou, O Lord*, to the soul that seeks thee; what art thou then, to the soul that findes thee? As I may appeal to any mans Conscience, that hath been softened with the Unction of Grace, and truly tasted of the powers of the World to come, to him that hath the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost; whether his whole life be not a perpetual *Mallusjah* in comparison of his natural condition: Whence they are able to slight all such objections, as he did. You tell me that scrupling of small matters, is but stumbling at straws, that they be but trifles: when I know your tongue can tell nothing but truth, I will believe you.

Fifthly, Beg of God that he will give you a *new heart*, and when the heart is changed, all the members will follow after it, as the rest of the creatures after the Sun when it ariseth. But without a work upon the heart, wrought by the Spirit of God, it will follow its own inclination to that which it affecteth, whatsoever the judgment shall say to the contrary. That must be first reformed, which was first deformed. It is idle, and to no purpose to purge the channel, when the fountain is corrupt. Whence the Apostle orderly bids us, first, *Be renewed in the Spirit of our mindes*; and then, *Let him that stole, steal no more*, *Ephes. 4. 23, 24.* Yea, it is Gods own counsel to the men of *Jerusalem*, *Jer. 4. Wash thy heart from wickedness: that thou mayest be saved*, verse 14. It is most ridiculous to apply Remedies to the outward parts, when the distemper lies in the stomach. To what purpose is it to crop off the top of weeds, or lop off the boughes of the Tree, when the Root and Stalk remain in the Earth? As cut off the sprig of a Tree, it growes still; a Bough, an Arm, still it growes; lop off the top; yea, saw it in the midst, yet it will grow again; stock it up by the roots, then (and not till then) it will grow no more: Whence it is that God saith, *Give me thine heart*, *Prov. 23. 26.* Great Cities once expunged, the dorps and villages will soon come in of themselves: the heart is the treasury and storehouse of wickedness, *Mat. 12. 34.*

such as the heart is, such are the actions of the body which proceed from it, *Mat. 12. 35.* Therefore as *Christ* saith, *Be clean within, and all will be clean, otherwise not, Mat. 23. 26.* therefore *David's* prayer is, *Create in me a new heart, O Lord and renew a right spirit within me, Ps. 51. 10.* Do thou the like, importune him for grace, that you may firmly resolve, speedily begin, and continually persevere, in doing and suffering his holy will: desire him to inform and reform you so, that you may neither mis-believe, nor mis-live. to charge and purifie your nature, subdue your reason, rectifie your judgment, reform and strengthen your will, renew your affections, and bear down in you whatsoever stands in opposition to the *Scripture* of *Jesus Christ*.

Sixthly and lastly, If you receive any power against your former corruptions, forget not to be thankful, yea, study all possible thankfulness; for that you and I are not at this present frying in *Hell flames*, never to be freed; that we have the offer of *Grace* here, and *Glory* hereafter, it is his unspeakable goodness. And there is nothing more pleasing to God, nor profitable to us, both for the procuring of the good we want, or continuing the good we have, than thankfulness. He will sow there (and there onely) plenty of his blessings, where he is sure to reap plenty of thanks and service. But who will sow those barren sands, where they are sure not onely to be without all hope of a good harvest, but are sure to lose both their seed and labour? Consider what hath been said, and the Lord give you understanding in all things.

And so much for the *Second Part*. An Appendix follows, wherein you may have instances of all sorts, how *Sin* besets *Men*.

F I N I S.

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